

One Thing by Lift the Wings

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Summary: Eleven wasn't the only human experimented on in the Hawkins Laboratory. One is the first of their kind, her mother, her protector, her savior. When Eleven escapes the facility, she follows, but Hawkins County is bigger than she expected and she needs the help of a drunken sheriff to find the girl before Brenner or a monstrous creature from the Upside Down gets her first. Hopper/OC

1. Prologue

Hi everyone! Thank you for stopping in! I hope you enjoy!

Prologue

Wailing sirens broke her from her stupor, the man slamming into her from behind freezing abruptly and muttering an irritable, "What the fuck?"

Her emerald eyes flitted to him briefly, before returning to the door, curious and concerned. She wondered what the cause for alarm could have been and if it had anything to do with her daughter. Red lights flashed wildly and men and women dashed past her room, heedless of her presence - or the man's - behind closed doors.

He moved then, the accompanying sound of his zipper allowing her a breath of relief; he moved around the table to which she was currently strapped, stuffing his crumpled dress shirt back into his waistband. He peered through the window in concern, glancing haphazardly at her and muttering, "If it's that little bitch again, he's gonna punish *you*. You know that, right?"

He called her that word, the one she hated, and she struggled with all her might to free herself from her restraints. But they were made of stone, like her bed, hard and unyielding; well-picked for her and her particular talents. He sneered at him, eyes narrowed in anger, and vowed, "Soon."

He huffed out a laugh, shoving the door open and spoke derisively, "You say that every fucking time and I'm still here."

He disappeared from sight, not even having the decency to cover her back up, and she hissed once more, "*Soon*."

But she had more pressing matters to attend to than her own modesty; something had happened and it didn't have to do with her. If it wasn't her, it must have been her daughter. She struggled once more, cursing under her breath, desperate to dislodge the heavy helmet from her head, to free her hands from their tomb-like holds.

Screams echoed through the halls and her heart pounded in her chest. She needed to free herself, to save her girl. With a sharp inhale, she twisted her wrist, bones snapping from the strain. She felt them shift as she pulled her left hand free. Reaching over her head, she felt around with a wince, searching for the panel she knew lingered there. She punched and pressed with trembling fingers until she found the lever she had sought.

Pushing it away from her, she grinned breathlessly as her restraints slackened. She removed her right hand from its hold and pushed the crushing helmet away from her head. Shuffling down the bed, she swept her stark white hospital gown down over her backside and pushed away from the cold stone. She kicked the lashes around her ankles away and stumbled momentarily on her feet.

When she was certain she wouldn't pitch forward onto the ground, she made for the door. She hadn't heard it click, indicating that he had locked it behind him. He wasn't typically so sloppy - in his work - but it worked to her advantage.

She would have wiped herself down, retrieved a pair of pants to cover herself better, but her daughter was quite possibly in danger and she couldn't waste time worrying about something so trivial. She tested the door handle with her uninjured hand, a slight grin tugging at her lips when an electrical current didn't course through her body at her touch.

Without a thought, she opened the door, slipping out into the hallway and heading for the cell in which she knew her daughter was kept. On high alert, her eyes darted this way and that, her free hand raised in front of her defensively in case she encountered any of Brenner's men. Preferably the madman himself, but his lackeys would do.

Several unfamiliar scientists dashed down the corridor ahead of her, heedless of her presence when they passed her; she didn't bother with them, though she certainly would have liked to. Her daughter was her focus and she could not waste anymore time.

The alarms hurt her ears, but she did her best to ignore them, approaching the girl's cell at a determined jog. As she neared, three

men in military uniforms came into view. They raised their guns at her, screaming unintelligibly; she simply raised her hand, a stream of blazing, blistering flames emitting from her outstretched palm. The men were engulfed in an instant, their shrieks filling the air, their guns falling uselessly to the ground.

She stepped over their charred corpses lightly, easily, and continued on her way. Her daughter needed her, she knew, and she wouldn't stop until she found her. If Brenner had hurt her, hurt her more than usual, she would kill him this time. She promised herself that.

But something told her it wasn't just the girl this time. They wouldn't be so terrified, she thought, not if it was just her. The girl was strong, more powerful than anyone who had come through the facility before, but there had never been such a strong reaction to anything she had done before.

She reached the cell, a whimper escaping her as she stared at the small, empty room.

She wasn't there.

Spinning on a heel, she ran, searching the halls and screaming for her daughter. She had to be there, somewhere. There was no way for her to get out, not unless Brenner *let* her out, and that was never going to happen. He had been very clear on that front.

But she wasn't there. In the room where Brenner liked to do his experiments was a frightening scene; black gooey vines stretching ominously along the western wall, across the floor and ceiling. It looked almost as though there was a hole in the wall, amid the mess, but she didn't focus long enough on it to be certain. Her eyes turned to the sensory deprivation tank and she fought the memories that struggled to come to the forefront of her mind.

It was broken. Shattered. Water had spilled across the floor and tiny, wet footprints trailed to the door.

She followed until they dried up, leaving her with only half an idea of where the girl might have gone. With a frustrated growl, she raked a hand through her short, chocolate locks, peering about and panting,

her heart in her throat. Where was she? Where could she have gone?

Closing her eyes, she calmed herself some and focused on the thought of the little girl. She would have tried to hide somewhere, somewhere small, unnoticeable. Her feet led her down winding halls, her eyes ever vigilant for any sign of the girl, or Brenner, or whatever his men were fleeing from.

It didn't take long for her to find her way in the basement, to an exposed drainpipe. It was small enough for the girl to fit through, and her if she tried hard enough. With only the slightest amount of trepidation, she slipped into the pipe; she had to believe her daughter was out there somewhere and she wasn't leaving her behind in the hellhole she had been born into.

With a steadying breath, she fled.

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Well, what did you think? I'm excited to get this going! Please drop a review before you leave! I'd appreciate it!

2. Chapter 1

Thanks for tuning in everyone! I hope you like this chapter! Please let me know by dropping a review!

Chapter One

It didn't take long for her to find her way in the basement, to an exposed drainpipe. It was small enough for the girl to fit through, and her if she tried hard enough. With only the slightest amount of trepidation, she slipped into the pipe; she had to believe her daughter was out there somewhere and she wasn't leaving her behind in the hellhole she had been born into.

With a steadying breath, she fled.

The pipe was tight and, had she not been in smaller spaces before, she might have panicked at the thought of getting stuck before she reached the end of the line.

As it was, she continued on through the grime and muck on her good hand and her knees without a fuss. The end appeared in sight after a long while, the air freshening and the world becoming a bit brighter.

It was still dark outside, but not as black as the pipe, and she breathed a welcome breath when she emerged from the tunnel. The outside world was different from what she expected; colder, but somehow more real than the world she had grown up in. It was lighter, crisper, and she liked it.

Rising crookedly to her feet, she glanced around for any sign of her girl. She wouldn't be hard to see, a pale, gangly thing among dark trees -at least, she assumed they were trees, having never actually seen any before. But the darkness and thickness of the trees prevented her from seeing very far.

Holding up a palm, she cradled a small ball of fire within her fingers and held it up. Glancing over her shoulder, she sought any sign of Brenner or his men, but when no one lunged for her immediately, she knew she was safe. Holding the light out before her, she moved

swiftly into the forest.

She grimaced at the rough feel of sticks and rocks beneath her feet, stepping gingerly but quickly. She stumbled a time or two, when her foot caught on a root, but she remained upright, her light aloft.

She called for her girl, quietly, hoping not to alert anyone else who would undoubtedly be looking for her. She wished for a sign of her, a flash of pale skin, of her stark, white hospital gown, but she saw nothing.

She didn't fear the forest; it interested her, but she wasn't afraid. It held uncertainties, yes, but she could guarantee nothing would be as dangerous to her as what she left behind in the facility. Men, she learned, were far more terrifying than anything she may encounter in the trees and the darkness.

She had no sense of direction, as one stuck in only a handful of rooms in her entire life wouldn't, but thought she was potentially headed in a straight line. She felt relatively certain that she *wasn't* going in a circle and prayed she was right. She *didn't* want to end up back at the facility; not only would it bring her closer to danger, but it would take her farther away from her daughter.

Suddenly, the trees thinned out and her feet touched something hard and rough. She traced it with a bare toe, wondering how safe it was to walk on; she pressed her whole foot against it, testing her weight, and determined it could hold her well enough. It was black, stretching as far as the eye could see on both her left and right.

A road.

She had heard the word, seen it in one of her books. Once, she thought.

She liked it better than the forest floor; it was less painful and more even, and it was nice and cool against her heated skin. She wasn't certain which way to go out of the two options. Her girl could have taken either path, or neither. More trees covered the horizon before her, beyond the road, and she easily could have thought it safer to fade back into the darkness.

A large, green sign sat beside the road to her right and she approached it, reading the stark, white words carefully. They might have been names - she knew that the facility was called Hawkins Laboratory, and she studied them and the numbers beside her curiously.

HAWKINS - 3

ANDERSON CITY - 15

FT. JACKSON - 28

Hawkins likely referred to the facility and she certainly didn't want to go there. Perhaps she had taken a turn somewhere in the darkness of the forest and was closer than she felt comfortable with. She wasn't certain what the numbers stood for, but the smaller ones worried her more than the larger.

With a resolute nod, she turned on a heel and strode purposefully away from it. If her daughter had seen the sign, she wouldn't have headed in that direction.

She hesitated a few yards away from the sign, though, and peered over her shoulder at it, contemplating the words once more. What if she hadn't seen the sign? What if she went that way? Did it really lead back to the facility?

Yes, it probably did.

She faced forward once more, her eyes widening at the blinding lights rapidly approaching her. She raised her hands before her defensively, wild, burning flames bursting from her palms. The lights swerved immediately, away from her fire, veering violently off of the road and slamming into the very sign she had been reading.

The lights belonged to a large vehicle, a car, she thought. It was white, with a stripe of brown along the side and words she didn't want to get close enough to read. She began to run from it, before a muffled shout caught her attention.

She turned, torn, wondering who might be inside. If it was Brenner, there would have been more vehicles. That wasn't big enough to

carry the amount of men he would send out after them. He never did anything without at least five or six armed men accompanying him.

Perhaps it was just a regular person, though sometimes she doubted they even existed. Anyone within the facility was either there to hurt her or to create something that hurt her.

Worrying her lower lip, she frowned when the shouting occurred again. With a huff, she ran back to the car, knowing she could easily fry the person inside to a crisp if need be. She ran to the left side of the thing and glanced at the front of it. It steamed and smoked, crumpled as it was, but it didn't originate from her gift.

She peered through the glass and saw a large figure struggling to disentangle himself from the contraption he found himself in. There was a large, white balloon-like thing hanging limply before him and he fought with it for a moment.

He turned toward her briefly, before hastily returning his attention to her. He banged a fist against the window and she jumped, looking at the words on the side of his car.

HAWKINS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

She wasn't entirely sure what that meant, but she winced at his shout and reached for the glass. She pressed her hand against it, her palm glowing red; in mere seconds, the window heated and melted under her touch.

The man inside the vehicle - for he was a man, and a big one at that - stared at her in surprise, blood trickling from his temple. He shook himself and reached out of the window, his crimson-coated fingers hooking onto the latch on the door and opening it wide.

He shoved himself out, falling to the ground and shuffling backwards on his hands, coughing and cursing loudly. She backed away from him herself, skittish now, and eyed him warily. She raised her hands, but didn't attack just yet. If he was from the facility, she would take care of him, but if he could guide her to her daughter, she would do what she had to.

"Where'd that fire come from?!" he exclaimed wildly, his voice deep and panicked, "are you hurt?! Ma'am, are you alright? Ma'am! Ma'am!"

She stumbled away from him and he raised his hands in surrender, hauling himself to his feet. He pressed his hand to his forehead, a pained grimace twisting at his scruffy face.

"Ma'am, it's alright," he approached her cautiously, his hands raised innocently, "my name is Jim Hopper. Are you okay?"

/

Doctorwhoamypond: thank you so much! Hope you like this chapter!

PsychoBeachGirl88: aww thanks! I'm so glad you liked it!

3. Chapter 2

Hello all! I'm glad you're tuning in! I hope everyone enjoys this chapter; please drop me a review :)

Chapter Two

He shoved himself out, falling to the ground and shuffling backwards on his hands, coughing and cursing loudly. She backed away from him herself, skittish now, and eyed him warily.

She raised her hands, but didn't attack just yet. If he was from the facility, she would take care of him, but if he could guide her to her daughter, she would do what she had to.

"Where'd that fire come from?!" he exclaimed wildly, his voice deep and panicked, "are you hurt?! Ma'am, are you alright? Ma'am! Ma'am!"

She stumbled away from him and he raised his hands in surrender, hauling himself to his feet. He pressed his hand to his forehead, a pained grimace twisting at his scruffy face.

"Ma'am, it's alright," he approached her cautiously, his hands raised innocently, "my name is Jim Hopper. Are you okay?"

Was she... okay? Okay? What did that even mean? Was it a name? An assessment? If it was, it wasn't one she was familiar with.

She didn't answer, only eying him suspiciously, taking a step back, and then another as he cautiously approached her. He swiped the blood from his broken nose with the back of one hand, his dark eyes assessing her quickly.

She was quite a sight and Hopper wasn't certain he hadn't gotten a concussion from the impact with the steering wheel. Dressed in a dirty white hospital gown, she unintentionally showed far more porcelain skin than she should have. She was barefoot, too and her hair was shorn short, choppy and uneven, reaching just below her chin. Her locks were ratty and lank, a deep chocolate brown. Her bright green eyes flicked over him distrustfully and she kept her pale

palms faced outward at him as if to fend him off.

"Who are you?" he inquired gruffly, wincing as she flinched and continued to back away from him. He made an effort to soften his voice and queried, "What's your name?"

"Name?" she repeated, her tone soft and curious.

Hopper hesitated, uncertainty sweeping over his face, and reworded his question, "What do they call you?"

She stiffened fractionally, skeptical, now, that he was linked in any way to the Hawkins Laboratory, before straightening her shoulders and responding strongly, "One."

He stared at her for a moment, eyes narrowed as his own confusion before he repeated, "One? What... your name- you're called 'One'?"

She gave a short, sharp nod and he shook the wonder from his mind, instead replying, "Uh, okay. One. Are you alright, One?"

Again, she nodded, though she gave him no more than that.

Frustrated, he raked a hand through his own dark hair, asking, "What are you doing out here? Where did you come from? Hawkins General isn't anywhere near here."

The firing of questions had her stumbling backwards once more, as though they had literally slammed into her, eyes flitting about the road as if trying to decide which direction to bolt toward. He dropped his hands to his sides and huffed, more to himself than her, "Fine, don't tell me. It's not like I'm a fucking sheriff or anything."

She grimaced at his language, her eyes distant, and he scuffed his booted foot on the asphalt, chagrined, "Sorry. Don't... just stay there, alright? I'm gonna call for another officer to come and pick us up. Let me put this fire out before this shi- *thing* explodes."

He stalked back to the flaming car, eyeing it warily, before hastily ducking into the back seat. One watched him, a brow quirked in cautious interest, before slowly following him. Giving him a wide berth, she moved around to the front of the car, examining the

dancing blaze without fear.

She smelled the oil easily, having been forced to experiment with different flammable liquids in the lab, and extended her hand to the blaze. Before it could destroy the entire vehicle, she closed her eyes and called the flames to her. Tugging them toward her, she opened an eye and skinned it toward the man. He was cursing loudly, half-hanging from the back of the vehicle, and she pulled the fire into her hand. It crawled up her arm and submerged itself into her flesh. Her skin glowed orange for a moment before it died away, returning to its normal hue.

Stepping away from the vehicle, she tucked her hands innocently behind her back and waited until the sheriff - whatever that was - hauled himself upright, a massive fire extinguisher in his hands. She knew what *that* well enough, having been doused with its icy white cloud hundreds of times in her life.

His eyes flashed toward the hood, before flicking to hers; dumbfounded, he did a double take, hastening to the front of the vehicle. He stared at the steaming metal before glancing, bemused, at her once again.

Pointing at the once-flaming engine, he queried slowly, "That... was on fire, right? Am I hallucinating? Is this whole thing some bad fucking dream? Yeah, I'm gonna wake up in my goddamn chair with a sore fucking neck and-"

"Stop."

He did, having almost forgotten she was even present, his lips turning downward in a deep frown. Still, he did as she asked, muttering another halting apology, before scratching at his jaw and dropping himself into the front seat of the car. He leaned in, grabbing the walkie-talkie, and spoke gruffly, "Powell, I need you to send a squad car to Route 7, just outside Hawkins. I wrecked my car and I got a... female, mid-twenties?"

He glanced questioningly at her and she lifted her brows in silence. He took that as an agreement and continued, "Found her stranded on the side of the road. Bring some spare clothes if there's any in the lost

and found, alright?"

"*Chief, how much did you-*"

"I haven't had *anything*, now bring that *da- car* now!" he shouted, throwing the walkie against the dash and earning a sharp jerk of the head from One. He glanced at her and sighed, hauling himself out of the vehicle and shrugging off his jacket. He offered it to her and she narrowed her eyes, lifting her chin in distrust.

He rolled his eyes to the sky and forced himself to remain calm, "*Please* put the coat on. It's freezin' out here and you don't have hardly anything on. Here."

"Mine?" she queried cautiously, tiptoeing toward him and snatching the jacket from him quickly. She slipped it on and offered him a tentative smile, engulfed in the warm, thick material. It fell to her knees and the sleeves hung well past her hands, but she was happier than she had been all night.

"For now, yeah," he replied, opening the back door and gesturing for her to sit. Before she could offer him another suspicious look or curious comment, he raised his hands and assured her, "Don't worry; I'm not lockin' you up. You're making me nervous, though; take a seat."

She did, folding her hands neatly in her lap and staring up at him, "What is a sheriff?"

He eyed her in disbelief, a half-exasperated laugh escaping him as he threw his hands to the sky. His head pounded, his face ached, and he was thoroughly confused. Where did this strange woman come from? Who was she? Why was her name *One*? How did she not know what a sheriff was?

"Christ," he breathed, fisting his hands on his hips and rolling his shoulders, "I... help people, I dunno. I make sure people obey the law, arrest bad guys, investigate crimes. You've never heard of a sheriff before?"

"You help people?" she brightened, eyes wide and a hopeful smile

painting her face, "you help *find* people?"

"Like missing people?" he ventured, brow furrowed low over his eyes, "yeah. I do. Are you- is someone looking for you?"

They were, but she wasn't going to admit that to him just yet. Instead, she shook her head and replied, "*I'm* looking for someone."

"Who?"

"My daughter."

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Blackcaat711: thank you! I hope you liked this chapter too!

MultiFandomLover99: thanks! I'm glad you're enjoying it so far!

Guest: Thanks! I know, I couldn't resist!

Angelicedg: thank you!

4. Chapter 3

Hello all! Sorry for the delay! Did everyone watch the new trailer? Looks amazing!

Chapter Three

"You help people?" she brightened, eyes wide and a hopeful smile painting her face, "you help find people?"

"Like missing people?" he ventured, brow furrowed low over his eyes, "yeah. I do. Are you- is someone looking for you?"

They were, but she wasn't going to admit that to him just yet. Instead, she shook her head and replied, "I'm looking for someone."

"Who?"

"My daughter."

Silence fell between them and, the longer the sheriff stared at her, the more she became uncomfortable. She was used to people staring at her, but that didn't mean she had to like it. So long as he wasn't like the monster that enjoyed abusing her for hours on end, she allowed it.

"You have a daughter," he repeated, patting his chest before looking at the jacket he had given her. Gesturing toward it, he queried hesitantly, "Er... may I?"

She didn't know what he wanted but narrowed her eyes and nodded slowly anyway. She didn't necessarily trust him, but he hadn't shown himself to be a threat to her yet. She kept her palms faced upward on her lap, though, just in case.

He approached her, plucking at the jacket around her shoulders, pulling it out toward him and digging through the pockets. His movements were quick despite his injuries and he stepped back, armed with a pen and a pad of paper.

She fought the urge to roll her eyes; she knew what *those* were.

The pen poised over the notepad, he queried calmly, professionally, "What's your daughter's name?"

"Daughter."

He blinked rapidly, exhaling slowly, before repeating uncertainly, "Her name is... Daughter? You don't... call her anything else? What do other people call her?"

"*Daughter*," she replied vehemently, rising to her feet and approaching him quickly. He held his ground, though a spark of fear flashed through his dark eyes at her intensity, his gaze flicking between her brandished palms. "*She has no other name*. She is my daughter. Daughter *only*."

She hated to hear the girl labelled as *Eleven*. Not only did it remind her that the child was nothing more than an experiment trapped and tortured under her father's direction, but it also reminded her of the *others* she hadn't managed to protect.

"Okay!" Hopper exclaimed, raising his own hands in surrender, nodding fervently and assuring her, "I get it. Daughter, it is."

He jotted down some notes, however haltingly, and she lifted herself onto her toes, attempting to read what he had written. He tilted the pad toward himself, though, and queried, "How old is she?"

"Thirteen," One responded immediately, her memory flitting to the first time she had seen the girl, to the woman that she had been forcibly removed from. She had stumbled upon the scene, a child herself, and the bloodied infant had been shoved into her arms; the wailing thing caught her by surprise, but she held it close when the nurse had come to take her back.

"Okay, so your daughter is thirteen?" Hopper repeated, shaking his head slightly as though in disbelief, "who's the father? Where's he? Could she be with him?"

"No," she denied with a growl, lip curling as she glared back into the forest, "she can't."

"Is he dead?" the sheriff queried, eyes flitting over her face, taking in

any and all cues he could from her.

"No," she noted again, though the disappointment in her tone was obvious, "he's not. He's a bad man, Sheriff. His death would be a good thing."

"Did he... force himself?" Hopper inquired haltingly, a grim frown tugging at his lips. He swiped absently at the blood trickling down his nose and chin, his own injuries forgotten. "On you? And then you had your daughter?"

"Not him," she replied honestly, lifting a shoulder at his gaping expression as though it was nothing. It *was* nothing. She had lost any fear over it long ago; she'd fostered a burning hatred for the man, though, for well over a decade.

"Not- *then who?* What was his name? When did this happen? Is it still going on? How long has he been hurting you? Has-

"Stop," she begged him. Not from discomfort at his line of questioning, but the amount of questions lobbed at her. It reminded her too much of her sessions with Brenner and his men. She pressed a hand to her head and dropped into the back of the vehicle on once more. Lowering her gaze she assured him, "Another bad man."

"What's his name?" Hopper squatted before her, reaching out and resting a hand on her knee, now covered in his jacket, "I need to know. I can't help you if I don't know who's hurting you."

"I need you to find my daughter," she replied with a huff, rising to her feet and distancing herself from the still crouched sheriff, "I'm... *okay*. Find her. I need your help to *find her*."

He seemed resistant, arms resting on his thighs as he stared at the ground, but she stood her ground. It didn't matter what had happened to her. She had allowed it only because she couldn't *stop* it, and it kept the beast's attention off of her daughter. When she encountered him again, she *would* kill him; she didn't need this *sheriff* to do it for her.

"I *know* you're worried about her, and I *will* help you find her,"

Hopper assured her, standing and approaching her. He tucked the notepad into his pocket and the pen behind his ear as the strange, roaring noise she now recognized as belonging to a vehicle neared. She tossed a glance over her shoulder, but the sheriff continued, "I can help you with this, too, though. I can find him, arrest him-"

"I will *kill* him," she vowed, a flash of orange burning in her eyes. Her companion stared, startled, as a larger vehicle pulled up beside them, "help me find her, sheriff."

He sighed, warring with himself before turning away from her, stalking toward the vehicle. He spoke in muted tones to another man, who sat behind the wheel, before waving her over. She approached, cautious, and stared hard at the man, moving closer to Hopper when he turned to look at her.

"Uh, *One*, this is Powell," the sheriff gestured to the man, a hand falling to the small of her back. When she stiffened, he removed it immediately, but still she stepped closer to his side. "Powell, this is *One*. We're gonna help her find her daughter; she's missing. Not with the father. Last known whereabouts-" he glanced at her, but she stared, tight-lipped, at Powell, "unknown. You bring any clothes?"

"Nothing in the lost and found, Chief, but I stopped home," Powell replied, making to get out of the vehicle. *One* stepped back hastily and Hopper shook his head quickly. The other man remained in his seat, jerking a thumb over his shoulder toward the back seat. "Emma gave me some things. Don't know if they're small enough, but-"

"They'll do," Hopper replied, opening the back door and leaning in, retrieving a small bundle and offering it to *One*, "here, put these on. I'm gonna take you back to the station and ask you some more questions, get you something to eat. You okay with that?"

"My daughter?"

He caught her shoulder, giving her a light, warm squeeze, and vowing, "I'll find her, *One*. We'll find her. I promise."

Angelicedg: Thanks! I like all of those choices! I think a dark-haired Scarlett Johanssen is the closest to what I picture her as.

MultiFandomLover99: Thank you so much! I hope you liked this chapter too!

Guest: Thank you! I hope you enjoyed!

5. Chapter 4

Sorry doesn't begin to cover it!! I hope you're all still out there. This is the first I've written in forever. Please enjoy!

Chapter Four

"Nothing in the lost and found, Chief, but I stopped home," Powell replied, making to get out of the vehicle. One stepped back hastily and Hopper shook his head quickly. The other man remained in his seat, jerking a thumb over his shoulder toward the back seat. "Emma gave me some things. Don't know if they're small enough, but-"

"They'll do," Hopper replied, opening the back door and leaning in, retrieving a small bundle and offering it to One, "here, put these on. I'm gonna take you back to the station and ask you some more questions, get you something to eat. You okay with that?"

"My daughter?"

He caught her shoulder, giving her a light, warm squeeze, and vowing, "I'll find her, One. We'll find her. I promise."

The vehicle that Hopper had arrived in was in no fit condition to go anywhere, so he offered One a weary smile and gestured to Powell's, "Mind getting in?"

She regarded it mistrustfully, her emerald eyes sweeping over the man in the driver's seat and taking a step closer to the chief. He resisted the urge to roll his eyes, to order her to get in; he wasn't sure what had happened to her but he was certain she wasn't what he or any of the other Hawkins-ites would consider normal. She wouldn't - and hadn't - responded in what he would consider a typical way in dealing with her situation, himself, or even a car. And the way she spoke... it was unusual and he couldn't react in what he knew others described as a hotheaded manner.

Instead, he nodded, assuring her, "It's safe."

"Safe."

She repeated the word as though she understood it, but didn't quite believe him. What the hell had this young woman gone through to look as though she couldn't imagine anything really, truly being safe?

"Yes, it is," he replied, "trust me."

Her eyes narrowed fractionally, but she slid into the backseat stiffly, her eyes never leaving Powell. She jolted slightly, recoiling into his coat, as he shut the door, soft as it was. He rounded the front of the car, ensuring she could see him at all times, waving off Powell's perplexed, "Chief...?"

He climbed into the passenger's seat, peering over his shoulder and informing One, "You can put those on," his eyes flitted briefly toward the bundle clutched in her small hands and then to his jacket, which she clung tighter to her body, "and that, for now. But I'm gonna need it back later."

She almost looked as though she were going to argue, before she shimmied out of it. He turned forward once more, slapping at the rearview mirror to tip it up and out of sight to offer her a bit of privacy. Powell sat, spine ramrod straight, and faced the road. Hopper did the same, his cheeks twinging pink at the sound of her dressing in the backseat.

One toyed with the material, rubbing the soft fabric of the shirt between her fingers. She didn't know what the garment was called, but it was pretty, and warm, a soft light color that she had never once seen in the lab. She would have loved to show her daughter, and vowed to herself that she would be able to once she found her. And as far as what the chief had given her, well, he could say he was getting that back all he wanted, but unless he wanted to see it go up in flames and have third degree burns on his fingers, he would do well to let her keep it.

It was her first gift, besides her daughter, and she wouldn't be returning it so easily.

She watched the sheriff converse with the man beside him in low tones, eventually righting the mirror and peering over his shoulders. He ran his light blue gaze over her, nodding once to himself and

noting gently, "You look nice."

"Nice?" she repeated, touching her hair and then the shirt, looking at her lap and fighting a smile. No one had ever used the word 'nice' in association with how she looked, though her daughter called her that on occasion. She watched as he rounded back in his seat, rolling his eyes at the man beside him, who had made a strange noise, almost similar to a laugh though she couldn't guarantee it. She hadn't heard many of those in her life.

The ride was rather smooth, though she couldn't help but be a little nervous in the vehicle. It was her first time and she didn't know if those rumbling, belching noises it released were normal. It must have been, as neither man seemed concerned by them. She glanced out the window only once before touching her stomach and lowering her gaze. The world moved by at an incredible speed and she didn't trust this contraption, or the man controlling it, to keep her safe. And she needed to be if she had any intention of finding her daughter again.

Time passed quickly and they arrived at their destination within half an hour. The other man waited for them to exit before speeding away. One watched him go, lip curling slightly.

Hopper chuckled and she turned to him questioningly.

He raised a brow and gestured to his own neck, "You okay? You look a little green around the gills."

Though she had no idea what he meant, she simply nodded and lifted a shoulder, "It was fast."

"You've never been in a car before."

Though it wasn't a question, he didn't seem to have considered it before, offering her a sheepish frown, "It's not bad once you get used to it. Here, come with me."

He waited for her to proceed before falling in step beside her. One arm hovered at her waist, though he never touched her, guiding her with his presence toward a large building with HAWKINS POLICE DEPT written across the front. The lights were off within, and she

breathed a sigh of relief. Bright, blinding lights scared her and she found herself more comfortable in the darkness than anything else.

Hopper fumbled with a set of keys, mumbling to himself about 'jonesing for a cigarette.' She knew what those were, the foul-smelling sticks choking her when her tormentor decided not to put one out while riding her like a broodmare.

Finally he let the pair of them inside, reaching for a lightswitch. She stopped him with a gentle hand, shaking her head softly and muttering, "No lights?"

"Well, I'll need some," he replied, catching her hand and leading her through the blackness with the ease of a man who had walked the halls thousands of times before. Her heart was lodged in her throat and she stumbled over her feet as she stared at their interlocked fingers. It was a simple gesture, if his nonchalance meant anything, but her palm became clammy against his. His hand was so much larger than hers and could easily break the bones if he wanted to, but he put no pressure against her fingers. It was almost... nice.

And, if he decided he did want to use force of any kind, well, she would simply melt the flesh from his bones.

Hopper led her to a large room, gesturing toward a chair across from a massive wooden desk. He rounded the thing, clicking on a small lamp and eyeing her carefully, "This okay?"

She nodded and lowered herself into the seat across from him, examining the room in curiosity. It wasn't overly welcoming, but it certainly wasn't a fearful place. There were shelves full of books and she leapt to her feet, startling the sheriff.

"What the fuck?"

He reached for his gun, but the woman simply darted toward the shelves, running her fingers over every spine as she read their titles and authors.

"You like books then?" he queried, settling himself down and reaching for a cigarette. This 'One' was certainly a mystery; who

didn't know what simple things were, but enjoyed reading books? Did she even know of what she read? Or did she have different images in her mind for the words that leapt from the pages.

"I love books," she admitted softly, pulling one from its space and regarding him hopefully, "mine?"

He stared at her lovely, pale face, clinging to the book with such desperation, that he couldn't refuse her. Nodding, he offered her a lopsided grin, "I don't really read 'em much anyway."

A warm smile flooded her face and he found himself startled by the way his mouth dried out and his throat caught. Instead of questioning it, he cleared his throat and lit his cigarette, "So, One, what does your- ya know, I can't. I can't keep calling you 'One.' That's not a name. You sure you don't go by anything else?"

She dropped her chin and slowly slunk to her chair. Settling herself back down, she rolled up the sleeve of her borrowed sweater and offered her arm to him. Printed in small, terrible bold ink was 001.

"I don't have a... name. I'm One. The first."

The first what? Hopper wondered, aghast, eyes glued to the print. He had seen brands like that before, though never on a woman as young as her. Exhaling heavily, he shook his head, "Well, I think you should have a name. What can I call you? Do you like... Ellen? Christy? Claire?"

"Claire."

It was so delicate, so pretty, so different from the harsh sound of her true name. She whispered it with a wistful sigh, nodding to herself and affirming, "Claire."

"Claire it is," Hopper agreed, the corners of his eyes crinkling before a frown settled once more on his bearded face. Cautiously, he questioned, "Your daughter? She has a number too? Is she Two? Three?"

Lips pursed, Claire bared her teeth at the sheriff, "Daughter. She is my daughter. No number."

He raised a calming hand, his voice gentle, caring, but firm, "But where your from? What is she called? I need to know, in case someone found her and she told them. Is she Two?"

"Eleven."

The name left her in a hiss, her eyes flashing a deep, blazing red. Hopper started in his seat, but didn't reach for his weapon. Though it was unsettling, he wasn't at all sure that she was even human at this point and nothing more could possibly surprise him.

"Okay, alright, your daughter goes by... Christ, Eleven?" he rubbed his tired eyes with the heel of his hand, "there are eleven of you?"

"Not anymore," Claire noted, a twinge of sadness in her voice, though her eyes were still hard, "me, and my daughter. No more."

"And she, Ele-," he cut himself off hastily at the steely set of her jaw, amending, "your daughter, can I call her... El?"

Claire weighed the name, eyes flitting to the ceiling, before she nodded, a small smile on her face, "I like it."

"Me too," Hopper concurred, "so, she escaped from wherever you were? And where was that?"

But that was beside the point. It didn't matter where they had come from, only where her daughter, El, had gone. Claire chewed on the tip of her tongue, arms folded across her chest, and murmured, "A very bad place. Where is El?"

Hopper pursed his lips and scoffed, before calming himself and replying, "I'll help you find her, I swear. But we can't until morning. I-"

Claire rose to her feet, eyes blazing like a wildfire tearing across the countryside, her skin glowing a brilliant, burning orange, flames dancing at her fingertips. Hopper stared at the woman in awe, and not a little terror, leaning away from her and breathing, "Fucking hell..."

His hand lingered over his revolver, but he couldn't even consider

lifting a finger against her. What good would it do against this... this phoenix?

"Now, Hopper."

Angelicedg: sorry it took so long! Yeah I feel like Hopper is pretty accepting with everything that happens on the show so he's good with her lol

Guests: thanks! So glad you're enjoying! It is shorter than my normal stories so I'll work on lengthening them!

Gossamermouse101: thank you! I'm glad you like it!

LoveAndWar2001: thanks!

Ghouly-Girl: thank you! I hope you're still around for this chapter!

The True Hero of Skill: sorry it took so long!

6. Chapter 5

Wow, I haven't updated any of my stories in so long! But this new season is so good, it inspired me! I hope you like it and please let me know what you all think!

Chapter Five

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"Now, Hopper."

Hopper's dark eyes were wide, his mouth moving before he could even comprehend what he said, "What *are* you?"

She flinched at his awestruck tone and lowered her hands. Her skin lightened, the flames sinking back into her soul as though they had never existed. She hadn't considered the danger she posed, showing off her abilities. To her, they were as natural as breathing, simmering below her skin for decades. And everyone at the laboratory knew, gave her a wide berth even when the flames were dormant. They knew. They had created her, why wouldn't they know?

But this man, this normal, human male, knew nothing about gifts like hers apparently. The fear, the shock, the disbelief was written plainly across his broad, square face.

Swallowing thickly, she dropped herself back onto the chair, clutching the book and avoiding his gaze. "I... don't know what I am."

"I'm sorry," Hopper breathed, rubbing his rough, stubbled chin vigorously, "I-have no idea what's going on. I don't know who you

are, where you're from, how to find your daughter if you won't tell me."

Lifting her sorrowful gaze, Claire met his stare, heart pounding wildly in her chest. She had never trusted another person in her life, aside from her daughter. But she was a child, she looked to Claire for aid, for comfort. Her daughter - El - trusted in her, and Claire protected her as fiercely as she could in her limited capacity. But someone *she* could trust, wholly, explicitly?

Never.

This man, strange and short-tempered as he was, had only offered her help. He didn't know her, didn't need to. This was his job, his goal. If anyone could help her find El, who would protect her as she protected her daughter, it was Sheriff Jim Hopper.

"Hawkins."

"Wha-"

"Hawkins Lab," she reiterated, drawing her lips into her mouth, "I-am from there. And my daughter. We - she escaped. Without me."

Which she didn't blame her for. If given the opportunity, she had told El to run, run away as far and as fast as she could and never look back. Forget her; she would be fine. It was El who needed to survive. Claire would have burned the place to the ground to protect that girl.

"I-I'm not sure what happened," she continued, glancing at the pen left forgotten behind Hopper's ear. He was leaned forward in his chair, mouth agape, as he took in her every word. "Something bad. She ran when she could. I got out- the sirens made him stop."

"Who? Made who stop what?"

A tremor ran down Claire's spine at the low, harsh tone of Hopper's voice. A quick perusal of his face showed her his anger was not directed at her, and she continued powerfully, "Made him stop *fucking* me."

There were plenty of words she didn't know; plenty of words she

didn't like. But she knew that one and she despised it. He liked to talk when he was inside of her, and he was as crass and derogatory as he was disgusting.

Where the fire lurked in her veins, manifested itself along her skin, from her hands, a furious, false flame burned in the sheriff's eyes. His lip curled, fists clenching and eyes narrowing to slits as he hissed, "The man you want to kill. That's who was... doing that to you?"

At her nod, he growled, "He do that a lot?"

"It keeps El safe," she replied, lifting her chin and glowering defensively, "I do not like it. He says it's... an arrangement."

Hopper lunged from his chair, raking a hand through his hair and staring through the blinds of his office. His shoulders were stiff, set, his hands fisted on his hips. Claire watched him, a hint of trepidation drifting through her, until he turned and seethed, "That's *not* an arrangement. If you don't kill him, I will."

"I dream of his death, every night," she assured him, "he is mine."

Hopper cleared his throat and nodded, rubbing exhaustedly at his face, "Okay. Okay. So, Hawkins Lab? They did this to you? And ten others? How-how have I never heard of this before? Human experimentation? That's-there's no way I don't know about this. They make weapons, or-or-"

Claire quirked a brow and queried rhetorically, "Am I not a weapon?"

Well, he couldn't argue with that. Everything that had happened, that he had seen, in the past few hours - most notably the fire very clearly burning in the engine of his car and then equally clearly *not* - was mind-blowing. The flames disappearing, the flashes of orange in her eyes; the blaze he had seen not moments before licking at her palms.

Yes, he could certainly see her as a weapon.

And yet, sitting there, in that lovely purple sweater and his oversized jacket, she seemed... innocent. Used and abused as she was, this woman knew little of the world. And what she did know couldn't be pleasant, if her most recent revelation proved anything.

Slowly, Hopper lowered himself back into his seat, a heavy sigh escaping him, "You're a woman who has shit for luck." He raised his hand before she could even think to protest. "Sorry. Were you born there?"

Lifting a shoulder, she drew her lips to one side and admitted, "I don't know. She was. My daughter."

"Is she your daughter?"

"To me," Claire replied, touching her stomach and continuing, "not... from me. I can't- I don't think. I need to find her, Sheriff."

"Jim," he offered her a tired smile, "call me Jim. And I told you, I'm going to help you find her. But I'm not going to be any use if I don't sleep. And neither are you. You *do* need sleep, don't you?"

Brows furrowing, she didn't recognize the teasing in his tone and huffed self-consciously, "I am not a machine. But, what if she gets hurt? What if they find her?"

"They won't," Hopper replied, sounding far more confident than he felt. Truthfully, he couldn't be sure Claire's "daughter" wasn't hurt, dead, or recaptured. What he *was* certain of was that this woman wouldn't get a moment's rest - or give him one for that matter - if she believed he was wrong. He rose to his feet, mind reeling, and rounded the desk. Offering her his hand, he insisted softly, "Now, come with me and we'll start looking tomorrow. Let me get a few hours' sleep and we'll start a search. Just a few hours. I've worked with less but I'm not any good."

Claire offered him an apprehensive half-smile and allowed him to pull her to her feet. "Only a few? How many?"

"Three, maybe four," he replied, guiding her to the door and insisting, "will you get some sleep? When's the last time you had any?"

She didn't want to admit that before her escape, she had been being used, so she simply shrugged. Hopper - Jim - offered her a slight, smug grin and walked her to his car.

If Jim Hopper had ever been self-conscious of his life style, it was now. Walking into his house, despite its gorgeous lake view, he wished to God he wasn't such a fuck-up. Bottles lined every available flat surface, and it smelled like stale smoke and body odor. Cigarette butts of various lengths were littered about like snow and there were far too many empty Chinese containers filled with rotting food for his liking. Ears reddening, he brushed past Claire and began tidying where he could.

"Uh, just... make yourself-hang on," he hastily cleared a spot on the couch for her, stuffing a pair of dirty underwear into his pocket and praying she hadn't seen them, "make yourself at home. I-I'm sorry it-I, uh, I don't usually have company. Here, sit down."

Claire slowly entered the room, taking in the scene with an expression he could only define as less than impressed. Still, she didn't halt, silently making her way to the couch and sitting stiffly, watching him work.

Embarrassed, he continued rambling, grabbing the garbage can and shoveling anything and everything into it. Claire smiled at his strange, soft behavior and queried, "This is your- home?"

Nodding, Jim surveyed the room until he was satisfied, before heading to the refrigerator, "Yeah, it's not - it's not much, but it does the trick."

"It's... nice," Claire replied, earning a scoffing laugh from the sheriff. Her brows lifted high, she insisted with a nod, "It is. It's not... bright, or cold..."

"Yeah, it's neither of those things, that's for damn sure," Jim muttered, retrieving a half-empty container from the fridge. Opening it, he sniffed at the contents and, deeming them from his most recent Ling Ling takeaway, he dumped the noodles onto a plate and shoved it in the microwave.

"It does smell, though."

That brought a genuinely startled laugh from the sheriff, causing a smile to slip across her mouth. He nodded, bringing the now

steaming dish to her and offering it with a grin, "That it does. Sorry 'bout that."

"It's- okay," she huffed out a laugh, taking the food and tentatively sniffing it, "I don't mind." She didn't know how to describe the way the lab smelled. Clean and sterile, with an underlying hint of blood never far off. And it didn't smell like the way *he* did, when he was with her.

She much preferred this.

And the food, she decided, shoveling the spicy noodles into her mouth. A slight moan escaped her at the taste and she looked curiously up at Jim, "More?"

He stared at her with an odd, intense look on his face. It took him only a moment to register her question before nearly leaping to his feet and hastening back to the kitchen. Clearing his throat, he croaked, "I, uhm, I don't think so. Not that doesn't have mold or anything on it. I can-"

"No," Claire shook her head and stood, tentatively creeping into the kitchen behind him. Staring up at his reddened cheeks, she assured him, "Sleep. Then we find her."

Nodding, Jim rubbed his nose and jerked his head down the hallway, "C'mon, this way. Just a few hours of sleep and we'll go look for El."

A skeptical look fell over her face, but Claire followed his instruction, moving through the house to a small, cramped room with what she could only assume was a real bed. The sheets were crumpled and there were more bottles and cigarettes on the stand beside it, but it was so much more inviting than the stone slab she slept on, that she couldn't help but run to it. Without a word, she dropped onto it, revelling in the softness of it.

"I haven't gotten a new mattress since I moved back," Jim admitted sheepishly, dwarfed in the doorway as he watched her, "and the sheets- I think I might have another set somewhere. I can change them if-"

Claire shook her head adamantly, running her hand over the mattress and pressing down slightly, "My bed is stone. I don't get... sheets."

Jim inhaled sharply, lips pursed, and ran a hand along his chin, "That... doesn't surprise me actually. After what you've told me. Is the stone so you don't, ya know, set things on fire?"

Nodding, Claire stroked his pillow and smiled softly, "I would have."

"I believe you," Jim chuckled, moving to the dresser and rifling through the top drawer. After a moment, he pulled out a shirt, offering it to her. She would be drowning in it, small as she was, but it would be more comfortable than the jeans and jacket she wore now. "Here. Put this on and go to sleep. I'll be on the couch, in the other room. If you need anything, come get me, okay? I'll set an alarm; three hours. Four max. And then we'll find her. I promise."

Claire wrapped his coat tighter around herself and his throat clenched at the sight. Her eyes narrowed slightly, her lip curling into a determined grin, "Three."

/

Angelicedg: I'm sorry it took so long to update again, but after watching the new season, I needed to write again!